2nd Vital Nodes Policy Dialogue – minutes

15 October 2019 - Vienna House Brussels

<u>Part 1 – policy dialogue</u>

Welcome and introduction by Mr. Sjaak Van der Werf, Rijkswaterstaat, project manager Vital Nodes

- Aim of Vital Nodes is to deliver validated recommendations for a more effective and sustainable integration of all 88 urban nodes into the TEN-T corridors focusing on freight logistics and to establish a long-lasting European expert network based on existing (inter)national and regional networks for safeguarding long-term continuity in knowledge and implementation.
- Vital Nodes addresses the challenges of integrating freight logistics of urban nodes into network corridors, last-mile and long-distance freight logistics, interaction with passenger transport; complex issue with a multi-dimensional character.
- Need for more (cost-)efficient and sustainable integration addressing network issues of the (freight logistic) transport and mobility system but also spatial issues related to urban vitality (socio-economic development, spatial and environmental quality & liveability).
- Purpose of the policy dialogue is to present, discuss and validate the policy recommendations.

Keynote speech Mr. Mathieu Grosch, coordinator TEN-T Orient/East-Med Corridor

- CEF funding is important but should be blended with structural funds. All nodes are different. In the revision of the TEN-T guidelines, we should not expect general provisions for urban areas, because they are so different from each other.
- Need for significant financial resources for infrastructure improvement. But these investments must be converted into jobs. The corridor approach is good because it is integrated, but each city has to engage their citizens directly.
- Data missing: need for ex ante/post monitoring to evaluate the interventions. Different ways of evaluating impacts should also be considered. Focus on the type of quality of jobs we are creating, not only on the number of new jobs.
- There are currently 25 different programmes to fund transport initiatives at urban level, which creates a fragmented situation. We need a one-stop-shop[1], cooperation and coordination b/w the programmes, and between the different funding instruments: CEF and structural funds should be integrated and aligned, in terms of funding but also objectives. This means for example that while CEF is aiming at modal shift, structural funds might be mistakenly used to just building roads.

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[1] See for example *https://ec.europa.eu/info/eu-regional-and-urban-development/topics/cities-and-urban-development_en*

- Need for political will and support and local level + good local expertise, especially in the preparation of dossiers and proposals, at all governance levels. They should work together and not in silos.

Keynote speech Ms. Gudrun Schulze, EC – DG MOVE

- Connection b/w long distance and local transport. Different policy areas: urban mobility, urban planning, emissions and decarbonization.
- *Review TEN-T guidelines*: evaluation is ongoing (to be finished mid-2020), public consultation finished. Cities have been quite active. Revision of the role and function of the whole network including urban nodes. It is not only about the infrastructure, but also addressing all the users involved.
- Overall objective of decarbonizing transport implies so many actions that the EC has decided to advance the evaluation process (before 2023).
- In 2011, 88 Urban Nodes were defined b/w DG MOVE and DG REGIO. The nodes were selected from a planning purpose, but role and function were not concretely addressed. Some metropolitan areas that are not part of the 88 should be included in the revision.
- Passenger nodes and hubs (besides ports, airports, etc.) are becoming more and more important. Facilitation of the last mile connection for passengers with rail is becoming an essential topic.
- A more complete definition of Urban Nodes is needed, further streamlining of the objectives and requirements will be discussed during the revision of TEN-T Guidelines. In 1-1,5 years the process will be much more mature.
- There are many programmes and activities ongoing, there's a need to elaborate a holistic view while also considering the fact that each city has its particularity. Connection with SUMPs and FUAs should be clear.
- Work on freight terminals in relation to the urban nodes would be of particular interest for the revision.

Keynote speech Prof. Dr. Jos Arts, University of Groningen, Innovation Manager Vital Nodes (see Powerpoint presentation)

- Need for data and collaborative planning to connect roads, railways, shipping, air traffic etc. at Urban Nodes level, also to connect transport with energy infrastructure.
- All activities compete for the same space ('common ground'), but planning, development and management is organized in silos ('tragedy of the commons'), there's a need for 'common sense' and to take the functional urban area into account.
- Starting with a pilot workshop in Vienna focusing on challenges, solutions, impacts, good practices and EU added value, Vital Nodes applied its methodology and toolkit to a selected group of 8 'tier 1' and 28 'tier 2' urban nodes, eventually expanding to all 88 urban nodes.

- The Vital Nodes toolbox for Urban Nodes – which is available at www.vitalnodes.eu – will be further developed as official EU SUMP 2.0 topic guidelines
- Maps on three levels (local, region / Functional Urban Area - FUA, TEN-T corridor)
- Mind-set: thinking on different scales (city, metropolitan area, cross-border, corridor) and dimensions
- Linking different scales and topics (spatial planning, infrastructure, passenger and freight transport)
- Vital Nodes policy recommendations (see presentation for complete overview) are structured along five clusters or dimensions, including:
    1. Strategy / Value: e.g. 'Support common understanding and collaborative policy making at different policy levels (local, FUA, national, international')';
    2. Network / Space: e.g. 'Develop a multi-modal planning approach and coordinated asset management, considering its impact at local, FUA and corridor level';
    3. Governance / Time: e.g. 'Stimulate active collaboration between parties at different governance levels and across sectors/ disciplines';
    4. Finance / Funding: e.g. 'Provide funding for urban nodes focused on integration in the TEN-T corridors by pre-allocating budget for upcoming calls/applications. E.g. stepwise 5-10-20% of CEF funding for integrated investments in infra, mobility, spatial, environmental measures enhancing integration';
    5. Research / Data: e.g. 'Stimulate further development on data-based policy-making and planning and a corresponding datasets and monitoring framework to determine the functioning of urban nodes, and network';
- Summarising, in order to better integrate Urban Nodes into the TEN-T network, there's a need to link up different scales, take into account the FUA, create links between multiple dimensions, develop an integrated, multi-governance approach and develop a fact-based planning; in addition, funding should be focused on integration and combining of funds, in addition there's also potential for an urban nodes coordinator at EU level.

Debate

- Matthieu Grosch: Important to define all actions and investment lines in the legislation that would support the work with Urban Nodes. Not necessary to try to develop a more specific definition of Urban Nodes, they are all different. The role of the corridor coordinator is to defend the corridor interconnection and complementarity: each investment in one Urban Nodes has an implication on the other nodes and other countries. Pragmatic approach, starting from an urban development strategy even before a mobility plan.
- Jos Arts: Importance of Small & Medium-sized cities to be considered in the overall TEN-T policy. Redefinition of UNs in this sense is necessary.
- Steve Phillips (CEDR): Pipelines should also be considered a transport mode. Urbanization will grow, and we have to adapt transport to that. But transport could be the cause of this. We should respect more small & medium sized cities. It is good to

link the funding, but CEF is about network operations, and structural funds are about local development.

- Mathieu Grosch: structural funds should follow the objectives and fulfill the quality requested at EU level (since it is still EU funding).
- Julien Tami (INEA): Interchanging facilities b/w long distance and last mile destinations. New CEF call about to be published, focused also on UNs. Need to improve the text of the calls, the EC need to better clarify what they need.
- Mathieu Grosch: operators should be more creative in finding solutions, as well as different governance levels: they could be co-owners/managers of the same infrastructure. UNs coordinator: could be ok, but then you also need a cross-boarder coordinator, etc. Now, all the corridors coordinators are aware of the importance of the UNs on their corridor. Multi-level governance is important, but the EU countries are so different that you cannot find the definition of a standardised multi-level governance approach. You should create the network and cooperation in a practical way, case by case. Too much theory can block and fragment the dialogue. Good example: EGTC.

Part 2 – Policy Recommendations Workshop

- Access regulation / UVAR guidelines should be mentioned in the recommendations.
- Cities should include TEN-T related provisions within the local SUMPs.
- Logistics and freight are organized by many companies at EU level, therefore national and local level are often not sufficient. Need to develop clear and straightforward key messages for communication and political usage.
- What should be pursued: more precise of UNs or focus on practical implementation
- Interaction b/w cities and regions should be mapped and represented.
- Competition between freight and passengers is not addressed enough in the recommendations. This is happening more and more in different EU cities. In Venlo, they look at which movements bring added value to the region, therefore they prioritize the ones that they consider more strategic.
- On ring roads there is a lot of competition, in particular there is a lot of local traffic that could be avoided. Link with the SUMP is there, but it should be more explicit.
- A city should decide what they want to look like, and so the type of movements they want to encourage and attract. For example, Liege has 'attracted' Ali Baba, is that functional for the region? Did they want it?
- Blended call should be the starting point for blended funding. Is it realistic to have a one-stop-shop and more coherent funding instruments for Urban Nodes? Risk of adding complexity.
- Investing in advanced research and visioning studies could improve quality of CEF projects, not only basic studies for implementation. On the other end, CEF could be used to implement the results from H2020.

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